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Thirty-Seventh Report

COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF THE VIETNAM AND LAOS  
SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

(This report covers the period from  
31 October through 6 November 1973)

*This report has been prepared jointly by the  
Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.*

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7 November 1973

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**Foreword**

This is the thirty-seventh in a series of memoranda summarizing evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military materiel toward and into South Vietnam, (II) Communist-initiated combat activity in violation of the Vietnam and Laos settlement agreements, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina.

7 November 1973

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(This report covers the week from  
31 October through 6 November 1973)

The Key Points

- The North Vietnamese plan to kick off their dry season resupply campaign in the next few weeks.
- Despite plans for increased logistic activity, Communist shipments were light throughout Indochina last week.
- Another 3,500 troops began to infiltrate south from North Vietnam during the week. All were destined for southern Laos and contiguous areas.
- Recent evidence places the entire NVA 9th Division in Binh Long Province of MR 3.
- Military Region 559 has taken over control of air defense units formerly subordinate to Hanoi's Air Defense Command and now, for the first time, directly controls all North Vietnamese units in southern Laos.
- Satellite photography of North Vietnam [ ] reflected recent vehicle and possibly artillery imports overland from China.
- Last week tank-supported Communist forces overran three ARVN positions in MR 2 and struck Bien Hoa airbase with heavy mortar and rocket fire. Except for these incidents, combat activity remained at low levels in South Vietnam and Laos.

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## DETAILS

**Infiltration and Redeployments of North Vietnamese Personnel and Military Supplies***Personnel Infiltration and Redeployments*

1. Hanoi continued to send infiltrators south during the past week, as five regular infiltration groups -- all moving toward southern Laos and adjacent areas -- were detected entering the pipeline at Vinh, North Vietnam. Besides these groups, a sixth regular group -- traveling to the same area -- was observed farther south in the infiltration system, but it was previously included in our estimate of starts. The appearance of the five groups in North Vietnam and the inclusion of two other groups scheduled to move toward southern Laos increases our estimate of infiltration starts since 1 September to about 23,500 troops. All but 4,000 of these have been sent to southern Laos and contiguous areas. As shown in Table 1, the total number of troops departing North Vietnam since 1 September 1973 continues to exceed that during the comparable period a year ago, when most infiltrators were sent to the northern half of South Vietnam.

Table 1

**Comparative Starts of Troops  
from North Vietnam, by Destination  
1 September - 7 November<sup>1</sup>**

	1972	1973
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>23,500</b>
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	9,500	2,000
MR 5	4,500	2,000
B-3 Front	500	0
COSVN	4,000	0
Southern Laos/MR 559	1,500	19,500

1. This table covers the infiltration of North Vietnamese troops to South Vietnam, Cambodia, and southern Laos. Infiltrators moving to northern Laos are not included.

2. The 22 October message from southern Laos stating that 13,000 infiltrators would pass through the Group 472 area in November en route toward COSVN and the B-3 Front has been reevaluated (see the report of 24 October). As currently interpreted, the message indicates that 13,000 personnel will be sent to these areas during a five-month period, November - March, and not during November alone. There is, however, some question regarding the validity of the message. Such a lengthy projection of infiltration would be highly unusual and also, if only 13,000 troops actually are sent to COSVN and the B-3 Front, this would be the lowest number ever detected moving to these areas during a comparable period.

3. SIGINT of 2 November indicates that the 272nd Infantry Regiment of the NVA 9th Division has moved from GVN MR 4 to Binh Long Province of MR 3. The move places the entire 9th Division in Binh Long Province and the regiment in the same general area in which it operated until late February 1973 when it moved south into the Kien Tuong Province/Cambodia border area of MR 4. The identification of the 272nd in Binh Long Province increases the Communist combat force in MR 3 by 900 men and decreases that in MR 4 by a similar amount.

4. The Communists have apparently consolidated four infantry regiments in southern GVN MR 1, which has the effect of reducing the Communist threat in Quang Ngai Province. The consolidation involves three NVA infantry divisions, the 711th, 3rd, and 2nd. In early 1973, the 711th Division with its three regiments -- 31st, 38th, and 270th -- were concentrated southwest of Da Nang. The 2nd Division with three regiments -- the 1st, 52nd, and 141st -- had participated in the attacks against the port of Sa Huynh in Quang Ngai Province. The 3rd Division with its three regiments -- the 2nd, 12th, and 21st -- were targeting southern Quang Ngai and northern Binh Dinh Provinces.

25X1 5. Since September 1973, [redacted] the 1st Regiment/2nd Division has been resubordinated to the 711th Division in order to replace the division's recently disbanded 270th Regiment. The 141st Regiment/2nd Division has been resubordinated to the 3rd Division replacing the recently deactivated 21st Regiment.

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6. Although COMINT has not completely validated these major changes, we believe [redacted] the deactivation of the 270th and 21st Regiments. In any major reorganization, communications frequently is the last facility to disappear in order to maintain command and control while the reorganization is occurring. The status of the 2nd Division headquarters and its 52nd Regiment remains unclear at present.

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# Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

## South Vietnam

### Regular Combat Forces

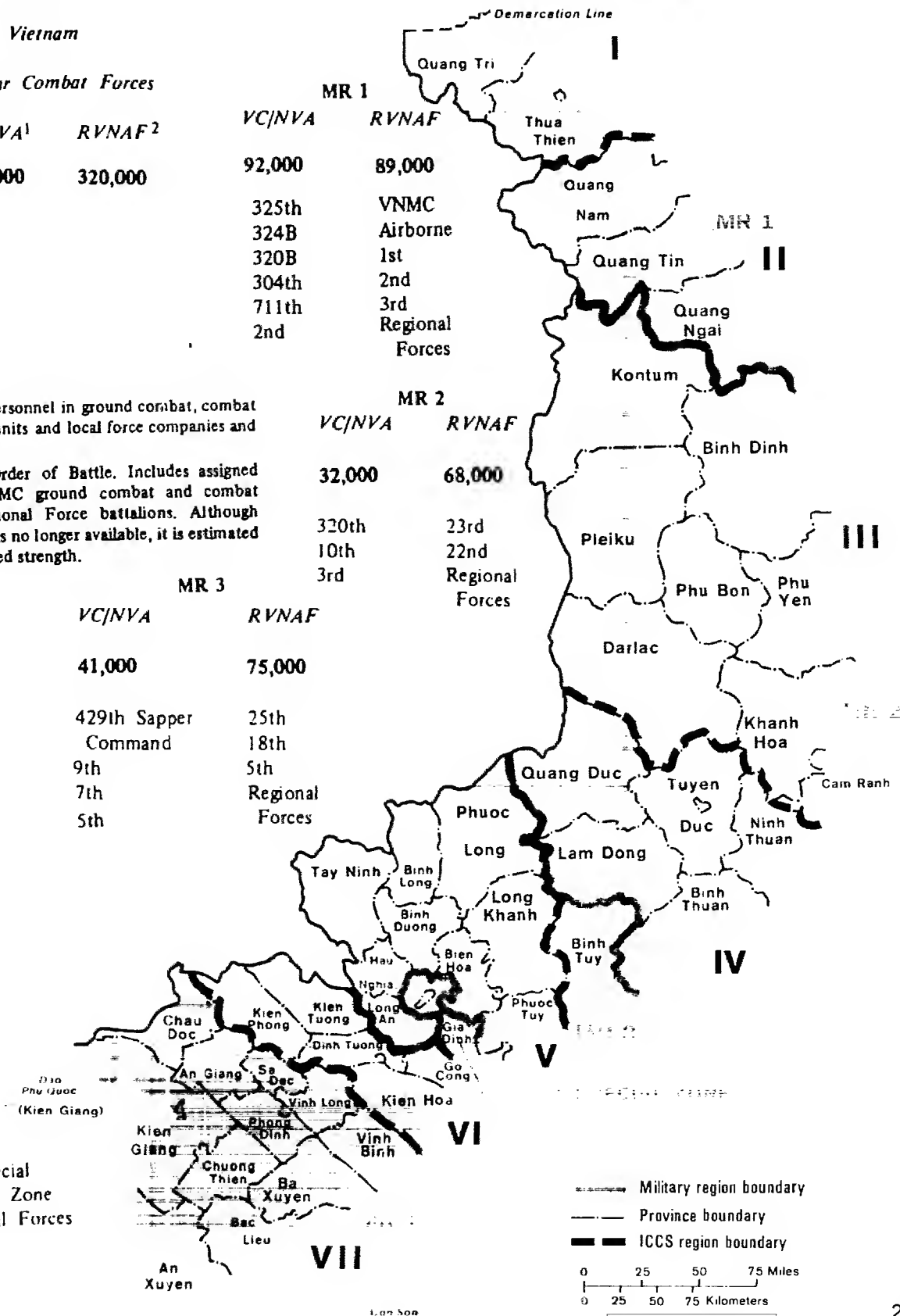
VC/NVA <sup>1</sup>	RVNAF <sup>2</sup>	VC/NVA	RVNAF
190,000	320,000	92,000	89,000
		325th	VNMC
		324B	Airborne
		320B	1st
		304th	2nd
		711th	3rd
		2nd	Regional Forces

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes assigned personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions. Although present for duty strength is no longer available, it is estimated to be about 85% of assigned strength.

VC/NVA	RVNAF
41,000	75,000
429th Sapper Command	25th
9th	18th
7th	5th
5th	Regional Forces

VC/NVA	RVNAF
25,000	88,000
1st	21st
	9th
	7th
	44th Special Tactical Zone
	Regional Forces



## Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies

### *North Vietnam*

7. According to COMINT, a North Vietnamese engineer battalion south of Dong Hoi was instructed on 4 November to have all bridges completed and passable by 15 November to support a "large transportation effort." Coupled with references of scheduled large truck concentrations and movements during November in southern Laos (see below), this message suggests that the Communists' dry season supply campaign will get under way this month.

8. Despite this activity, shipments in the North Vietnam Panhandle were light last week, the only significant ones occurring in the Vinh area where COMINT reflected large shipments of petroleum to northern Laos for the second straight week. Between 30 October and 1 November, logistic units at the Cho Si railroad station north of Vinh dispatched some 140 tons of petroleum to Route 7 in northern Laos. Several days later, on 3 November, a logistic unit near Vinh indicated that another 200 tons of petroleum would be dispatched to northern Laos.

9. All told, more than 750 tons of petroleum either has been shipped or was being shipped from Vinh to northern Laos during the last two weeks. Most roads in northern Laos have been closed for several months because of heavy rains, requiring the Communists to draw down stocks. Recent petroleum shipments probably will be used to support increased vehicle activity anticipated in this area.

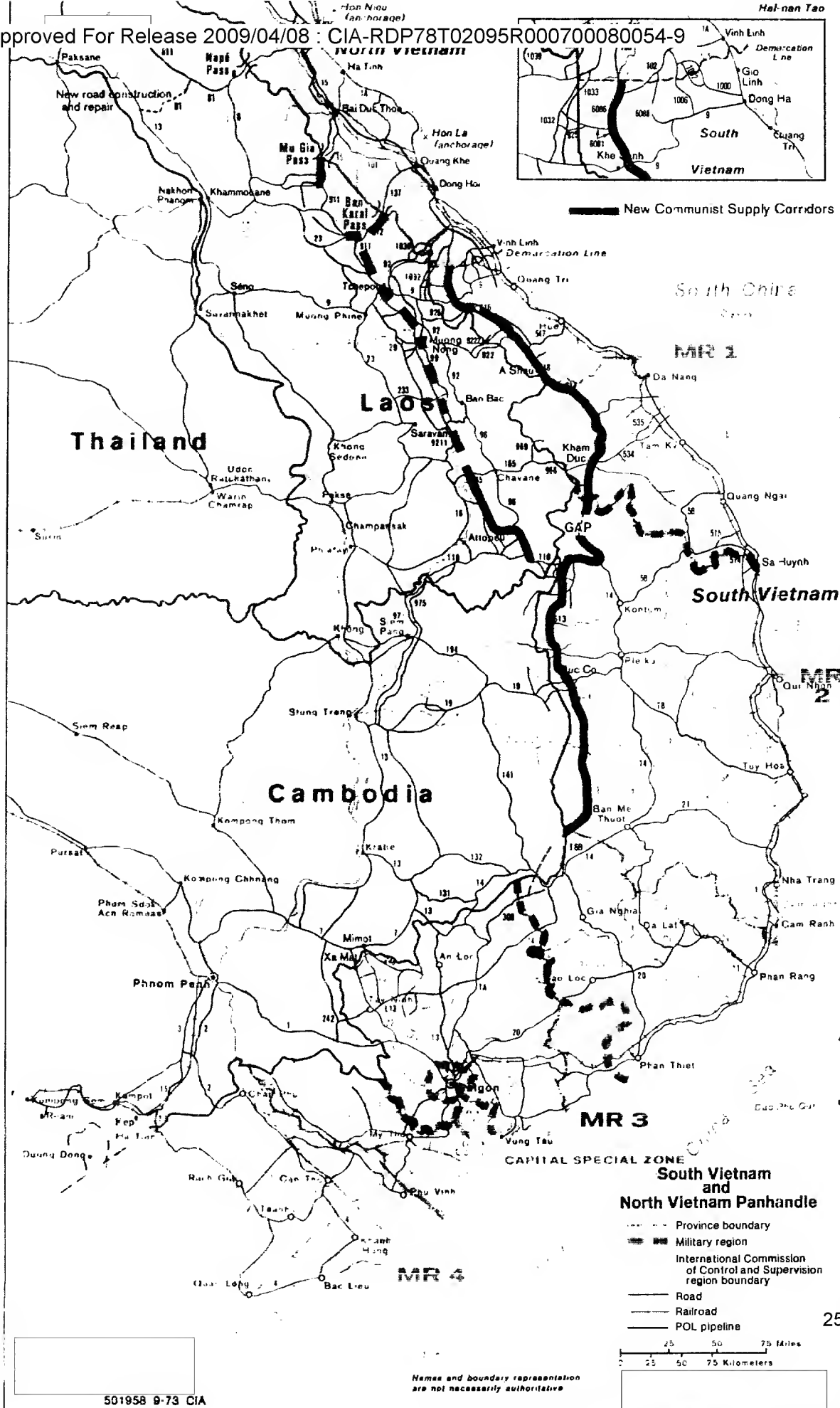
### *Laos*

10. Only small quantities of cargo were detected moving in the Laotian Panhandle last week, COMINT, however, indicated that accelerated logistic activity will begin shortly. On 6 November, MR 559 ordered its engineering units to deploy onto the roads. Earlier, on 27 October the NVA 574th Commo-Liaison Regiment told one of its battalions that about 1,000 trucks would move through the central Panhandle during the last half of November. Taken with the report that 400 trucks would move cargo on 15 November for Group 472 (the chief logistic authority in the Panhandle) (see last week's report) and the readying of roads in North Vietnam, these developments indicates that logistic activity will increase greatly in southern Laos soon.

11. Considerable road work remains, however, before the Communists can push supplies through Laos into South Vietnam or Cambodia. Photography  shows that the Route 966 exit corridor

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from southern Laos to Quang Tin Province in South Vietnam was impassable as were Routes 165 and 9960 which feed into Route 966 in Laos. Moreover, photography [ ] indicates that the Route 96/110 exit corridor to Kontum Province, South Vietnam, and the Route 975 exit corridor to Stung Treng Province, Cambodia, would require considerable repair before they could support traffic.

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### *South Vietnam*

12. In northern South Vietnam, rainy weather again inhibited resupply, but small quantities of food, explosives, and petroleum were detected moving. Most rear service units are involved in maintaining the roads and protecting supplies from further rain damage. For example, logistic units were ordered to spread crushed rock along a segment of Route 14, and as a result, the segment was to be closed until mid-November. This pattern of activity is not expected to change during the next few weeks because of continued poor weather.

### **Communist-Initiated Combat Activity in South Vietnam and Laos**

### *South Vietnam*

13. In South Vietnam, the total number of Communist-initiated cease-fire violations reported by the South Vietnamese Armed Forces since 27 January, 15 June, and for the last week (31 Oct-6 Nov) are shown below:

<u>Military Region</u>	<u>Total Since 27 January Cease-Fire</u>		<u>Total Since 15 June Cease-Fire</u>		<u>Last Week (31 Oct-6 Nov)</u>	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,831</b>	<b>24,280</b>	<b>1,462</b>	<b>10,325</b>	<b>74 (74)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>583 (612)<sup>1</sup></b>
MR 1	1,431	5,098	406	1,739	18	109
MR 2	604	4,049	340	2,195	16	115
MR 3	586	4,315	184	1,739	10	88
MR 4	1,210	10,818	532	4,652	30	271

1. Figures in parenthesis denote totals of the previous week.

14. Some of these violations may have been initiated by GVN forces rather than Communist forces, and it is impossible in all cases to determine the actual instigator. The tabulation above and the charts on the following pages, however, do show fairly accurately the trend in the amount of combat that has occurred in South Vietnam since the cease-fire. The fact that a combat incident occurred at a particular time and place is generally reported accurately by the South Vietnamese, even though the question of who started it may not always be treated in objective fashion.

15. A significant combat incident in Quang Duc Province of southern MR 2 occurred on 4 November when tank-supported Communist forces overran ARVN contingents at Bu Prang and nearby Bu Bong. Eight enemy tanks are said to have been destroyed near the camps. In addition, four ARVN artillery pieces were destroyed and four others captured by the enemy. The attacks on Bu Prang and Bu Bong were probably conducted to eliminate ARVN presence in that area in order to facilitate construction of the Communists' western highlands logistic corridor. To the south in MR 3, enemy gunners hit Bien Hoa Airfield with heavy mortar and rocket fire on the night of 5 November. Initial reports indicate that three South Vietnamese aircraft and one building were destroyed. A late report indicates that, on 6 November, another ARVN position at Dak Song, 12 miles northeast of Bu Prang was attacked and overrun by a tank-supported enemy force.

#### Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina

##### *Changes in Communist Combat Forces in South Vietnam Since 31 August*

16. Communist combat and administrative services personnel in South Vietnam now are estimated at 289,000 -- an increase of 13,000 over the 31 August 1973 CIA/DIA order-of-battle holdings. As shown in Table 2, 10,000 of the increase occurred in the combat force and 3,000 in the administrative structure. The augmentation resulted from:

- Deployment of Communist combat units from Cambodia into South Vietnam;
- Inclusion in the estimate of VC/NVA administrative services units who have extended their area of operations from Cambodia and southern Laos into South Vietnam;
- Recent creation of new units and the upgrading and reinforcement of others within South Vietnam; and

- Addition to the order-of-battle holdings of VC/NVA combat units which have been in south Vietnam for some time but who have only recently been detected.

Table 2

**CIA/DIA Order of Battle  
of Communist Military Forces  
in South Vietnam<sup>1</sup>**

	<b>Thousand</b>	
	<b>31 Aug 73</b>	<b>1 Nov 73</b>
<b>Regular combat forces</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>190</b>
NVA	152	159
VC	28	31
<b>Administrative services</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>99</b>
NVA	53	56
VC	43	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>289</b>
NVA	205	215
VC	71	74

1. For a discussion of changes in Communist military forces in South Vietnam between 27 January and 31 August, see the reports for 24 July and 5 September 1973.

17. The following map shows the distribution of Communist and South Vietnamese combat forces, by military region. Administrative Services personnel are not included. Although some of the current 19,500 infiltrators going to MR 559 areas are probably scheduled for North Vietnamese rear services units in western South Vietnam, available evidence does not yet permit their integration into the current order-of-battle holdings.

**North Vietnam: October Photography Evidences Recent  
Vehicle and Possible Artillery Imports**

18. Satellite photography of North Vietnam [ ] was limited by cloud cover and provided coverage of only a few military/logistic targets. Coverage of the Dong Dang vehicle parks at the North Vietnam-China border showed some 1,950 vehicles in the four major parks compared with 1,600 in three parks [ ]. A change of at least 500 cargo trucks was apparent in the several storage areas [ ].

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coverage, indicating that large numbers of trucks continue to be imported and processed through Dong Dang into the North Vietnamese inventory.

19. Of special importance was the possible identification of 80 antiaircraft/field artillery pieces in a warehouse area off Route 18, several miles southwest of Dong Dang. Comparative analysis indicates that 34 of the pieces [redacted] and an additional 46 were there on [redacted]

also showed artillery at two rail spurs between Dong Dang and Hanoi: 170 light antiaircraft guns at Ban Det near Thai Nguyen and 23 probable artillery pieces on flat cars in the Phuc Yen rail yard 25 miles northwest of the capital. Although this photography is not conclusive, the identification of artillery -- and armor -- at points along the primary overland supply corridor strongly suggests that considerable military equipment has entered the country via the Dong Dang/P'ing-hsiang rail link since then.

20. The small coastal ports at Quang Khe and Dong Hoi were covered. Although nothing unusual was detected, the level of transshipping activity was slightly above normal at Dong Hoi and somewhat below at Quang Khe. Vehicle traffic in the immediate area of these two facilities was also below post-cease-fire levels.

#### *Laos: Expansion of MR 559 Command Responsibilities*

21. MR 559 has expanded its command responsibility in southern Laos to include those air defense units formerly subordinate to Hanoi's Air Defense Command. COMINT indicates that the 377th Air Defense Division\* was apparently resubordinated operationally to MR 559 some time during September or early October. Headquartered in the Tchepone area, the division is the senior NVA air defense authority for southern Laos controlling the six antiaircraft regiments there. Because air defense divisions historically have been operationally as well as administratively controlled by Hanoi's Air Defense Command, the resubordination of this unit to a military region is unprecedented. Although the full importance of the apparent change is unclear, it marks the first time that all NVA units in the Laotian Panhandle -- including those of the Air Defense Command -- have come under direct MR 559 control. More importantly, it may reflect a larger change by Hanoi in the responsibilities of its out-of-country command authorities, as suggested by recent evidence of changes in

\* This division should not be confused with the newly created 377th Antiaircraft Division in Binh Long Province of South Vietnam's MR 3 which is subordinate to COSVN (see the report of 10 October 1973). The headquarters of this new division apparently was formed from cadre from the 377th Air Defense Division at Tchepone.

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COSVN's command authority (see last week's report) and the subordination of the newly created 377th Antiaircraft Division to that organization.

***Laos: Road Construction in Central Panhandle***

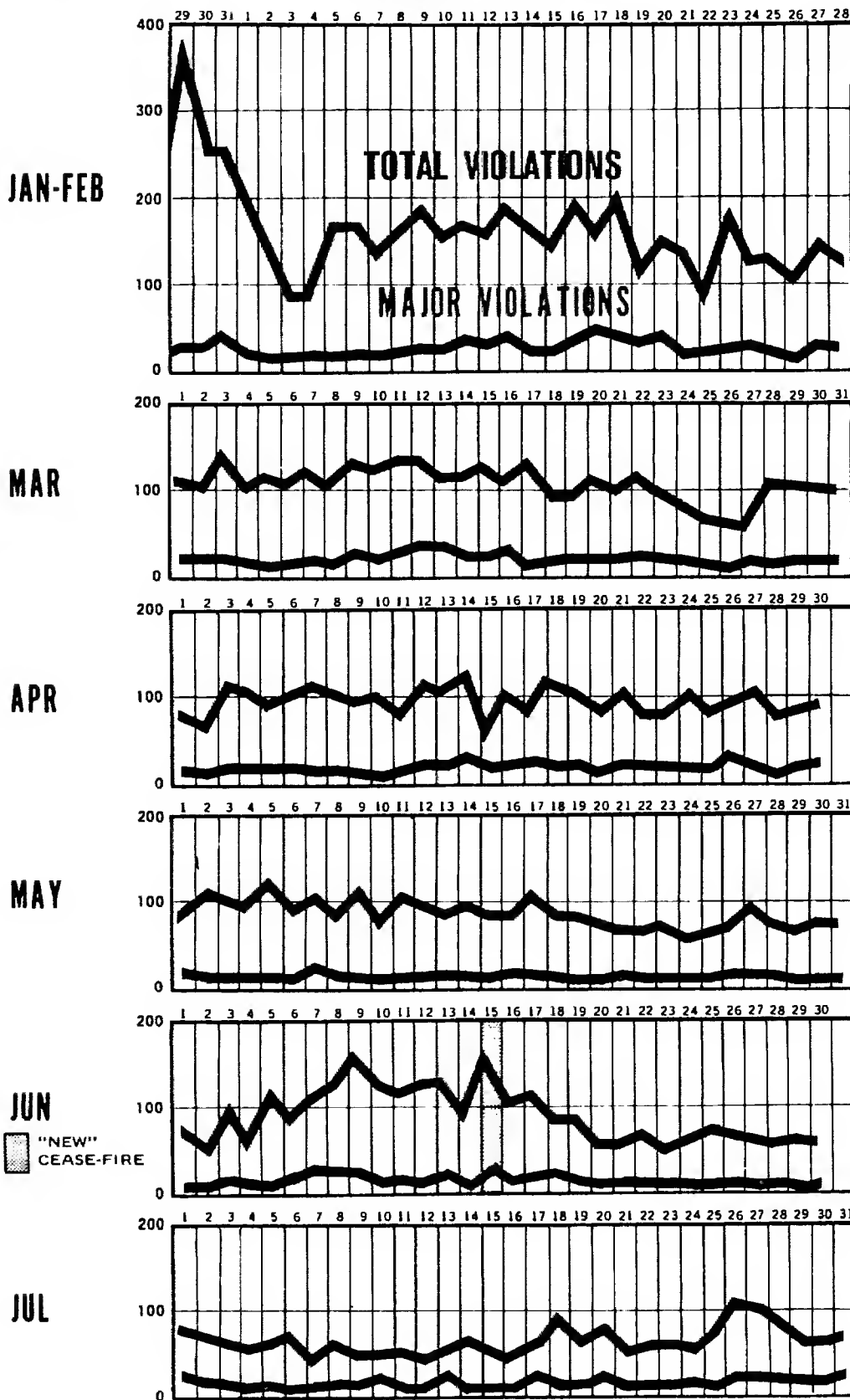
22. The North Vietnamese have resumed construction of Route 81 in Khammouane Province in central Laos, a project under way in June but halted during the summer rainy season. [REDACTED] photography showed rain-damaged sections under repair and two new segments under construction. The new road alignments indicate that the road will continue westward and will probably join Laotian Route 13 some six miles from the Thai border. This construction will give the NVA/Pathet Lao forces an east-west truck route from North Vietnam's supply route through Napc Pass (Route 8) across the entire width of central Laos.

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# CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS REPORTED BY RVNAF

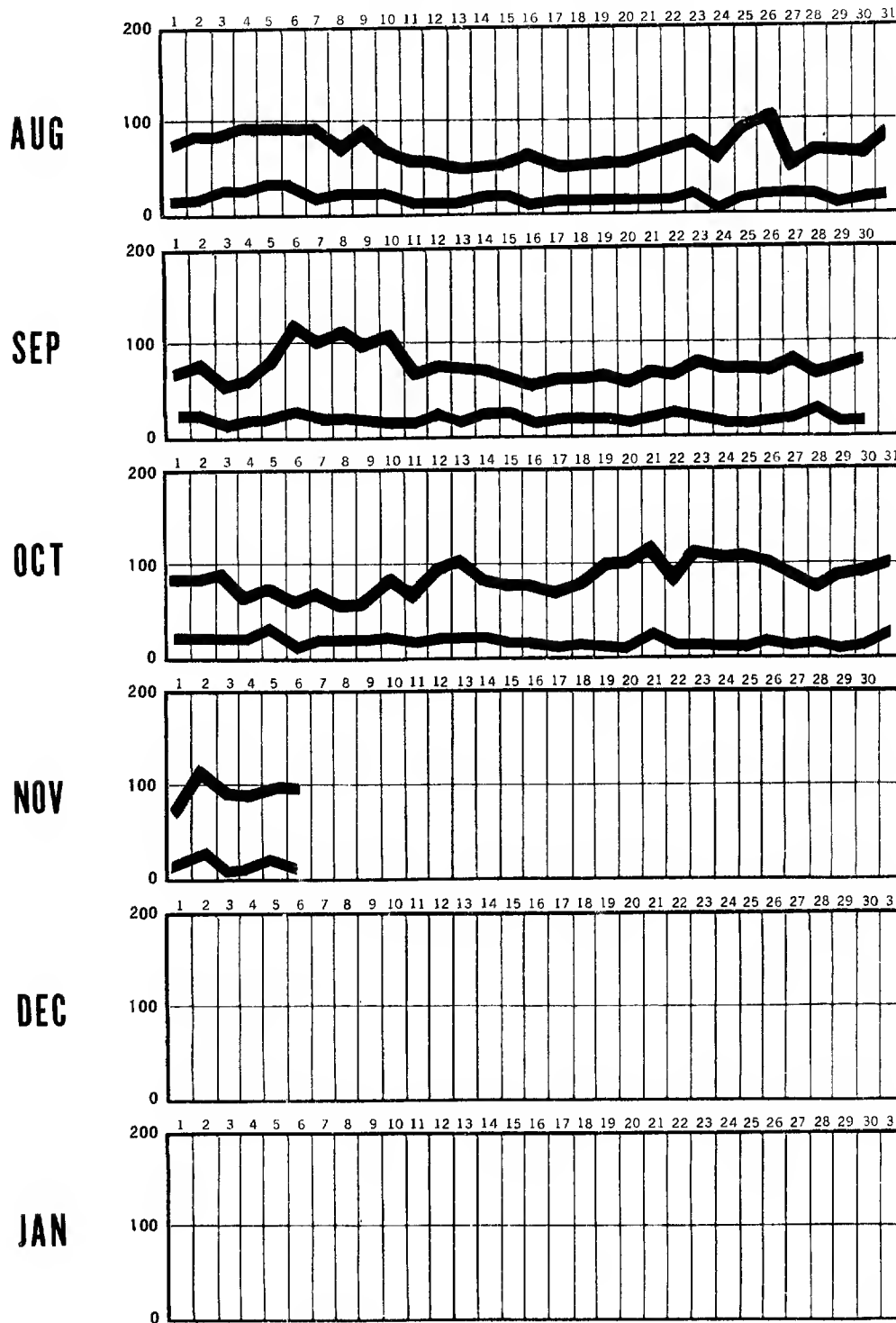
(28 JANUARY THROUGH 31 JULY 1973)





# CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS REPORTED BY RVNAF

(1 AUGUST 1973 TO THE PRESENT)



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## ANNEX A

INFILTRATION OF NORTH VIETNAMESE PERSONNEL  
TO THE SOUTH SINCE THE CEASE-FIRE

1. As a result of the detection at Binh Tram 8 near Vinh of five regular infiltration groups (5092, 5099, 5100, 5102, and 5103) destined for southern Laos and adjacent areas and the "gap-filling" of Groups 5091 and 5101, our estimate of infiltration starts has been increased by about 3,500 combat troops in the past week. Two of the new groups started south in the last week of October, while the other five left North Vietnam during the first six days of November. Group 5065 also was detected during the past week in southern Laos, but it has been included in our estimate of infiltration for nearly a month. Despite the detection of these groups, a block of six 5xxx-series groups (5093 through 5098) remains unobserved. These groups have been excluded from our estimate because they may not yet have entered the infiltration pipeline. In any case, an additional commitment of at least 3,000 troops by Hanoi to southern Laos and adjacent areas is indicated.

2. During the past week, a number of intercepted enemy messages [ ] movement of previously observed 5xxx-series groups through the southern portion of the Laotian Panhandle and in Quang Tri, South Vietnam. In some cases, the group was reported moving through Laos toward South Vietnam, while in others the group was being sent from South Vietnam into Laos. This illustrates that the North Vietnamese are sending these groups to their destinations in southern Laos and northern South Vietnam via both the traditional route through the Laotian Panhandle and across the DMZ. Although the use of either route at a given time probably depends on such factors as weather conditions and the number of groups being moved in each part of the system, the general use of both corridors indicates the expanding capability of the North Vietnamese to infiltrate personnel in the lower part of the Laotian Panhandle and northern South Vietnam.

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3. Evidence received during the past week has provided further information concerning the ultimate destination of several 5xxx-series groups. On 5 November, an element of Group 472 in southern Laos reported that Group 5065 was being sent to the 968th NVA Infantry Division, which operates in Saravane Province, Laos. This is at least the second infiltration group which has been assigned to this unit during the past several weeks and indicates that a portion of recent infiltration in the 5xxx-series continues to be used to strengthen NVA combat units in

southern Laos. Several other groups, however, were reported during the past week being sent to rear services units in the Laotian Panhandle and northern GVN MR I.

4. Since the 15 June "second" cease-fire, about 31,000 personnel -- 29,000 of whom have been combat troops -- have started toward the southern war zones. Since the 27 January agreement, more than 81,000 North Vietnamese personnel have infiltrated southward, including more than 73,000 combat troops and about 8,000 specialists. Of this total, more than 56,000 personnel have started south since 27 January, while 25,000 were in the pipeline moving southward as of that date.

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